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HAMPTON'S WORK FOR THE INDIANS

REPRINTED FROM THE "SOUTHERN WORKMAN," HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

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By

CAROLINE W. ANDRUS

In charge of Indian Records at Hampton Institute

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SINCE "In Red Man's Land," by Honorable Francis E. Leupp, was adopted as a textbook for mission-study classes, many inquiries have been received regarding Hampton's Indian work. It therefore seems well at this time to review briefly the reasons for its beginnings and to tell something of what has been accomplished.

The original plans for Hampton did not include any but Negro students. In 1878 a band of Kiowas and Comanches, who for several years had been prisoners of war at St. Augustine, Florida, were to be released. They had been brought East the wildest of savages. "They were taken in chains. They were filled with hate and feelings of deepest revenge for the wrongs which they thought they had undergone. One chief jumped from the cars and was shot by the guard. Another committed suicide on the way. Others would have done so if they had not been closely watched. They wore only their Indian blankets and great brass rings in their ears. Not one understood English." But, under the wise and efficient leadership of Captain R. H. Pratt, they had learned enough of the white man's road for a few of the number to wish to follow it a little further rather than return to their Western homes. There was no school suited to their age and attainments, but, because of the appeal of various persons interested in humanitarian work, seventeen were admitted to Hampton, their expenses being met by private individuals, as there was no Government fund available for the purpose.

Of the work at this critical period General Armstrong wrote: "A few weeks after the arrival of the ex-prisoners I called on the Honorable Carl Schurz, then Secretary of the Interior, to suggest that the so far very encouraging experience in Indian civilization be tried more fully by bringing some younger material, girls especially. He called on Mr. A. E. Hoyt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who stated in effect that the education of Indian girls had been a failure. I urged that there is no civilization without educated women and begged the Secretary to

let us try. He decided to do so and gave the necessary orders.
 * * The first party of Indians—the ex-prisoners of war—arrived April 3, 1878. In November of the same year forty boys and girls, chiefly Sioux, came. The experiment was watched by many skeptical eyes, but its success was so pronounced that ‘Congress, on the strength of the results at Hampton and Captain Pratt’s proved capacity, appropriated funds to start the great work at Carlisle.’ ”

The effect of Hampton’s Indian work, small as it has been in numbers, can hardly be over-estimated in its influence. From the beginning, records of each individual have been kept, and it has been easy to disprove the oft-repeated statement that all



A PARTY OF SIOUX JUST ARRIVED AT HAMPTON (1881)

educated Indians go back to the blanket. So marked was the success of the experiment that a public sentiment in favor of Indian education was created, and from this small beginning has grown the present system of Government Indian education, with an attendance in boarding and day schools of over 25,000 pupils. “Without the open door at Hampton,” writes General Pratt, “none of the advanced conditions in Indian school affairs of today would have become established. It would be difficult to locate the critical period in the development of the movement, but certainly Hampton and Armstrong (*Strong Arm*) can claim one of the foremost emergency positions.”

From the arrival of the first party of Sioux in 1878 until 1912 Hampton received an annual appropriation from the Government for its Indian work. This covered traveling expenses to and from the West, board, clothing, and certain incidentals, their

scholarships being paid by generous friends of the school. In 1912 this appropriation was withdrawn, and few there were who believed that any of the Indians then in attendance would have sufficient courage to remain to work their way through school, when they could so easily go to Government schools where every expense would be met. The result surprised even those who knew them best, for nearly half the number then enrolled (eighty-one) chose to remain, while eight new students were admitted the following fall. They were but a small band, but their determination to help themselves marked a new era in Indian education. That these young people chose to stay, and



HAMPTON'S PLUCKY INDIANS

Some of those who remained after the Government appropriation was withdrawn

that even a few more were willing to come, was in itself a tribute to the training received at Hampton and the reputation the former students had made on their reservations. The results have more than justified the efforts put forth. Those who remained have gained an appreciation of the value of time, work, and money, have learned to look and plan ahead, and have strengthened in purpose in a way that would hardly be possible for students who were not working out their own salvation.

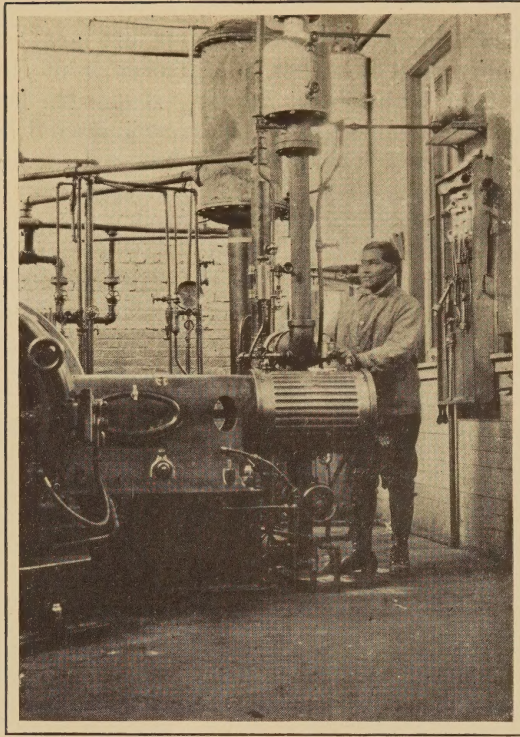
Hampton's aim has always been to fit each individual, so far as may be in so large an institution, to meet the needs of the community to which he or she plans to return. For this reason a combination of academic and industrial work has been the

school's chief feature. The life of the students is a strenuous one, and only those with an earnest determination to make something of themselves have the courage to undertake or pursue the course. Students enter on one of three footings—as work, trade, or day-school students. Those in the first group are assigned to some department of the school where they work all day and attend school at night. For all work they are paid according to



AN INDIAN TRADE STUDENT

their speed and skill, and at the end of a year they have met all their own expenses and laid up sufficient credit with the school to partly or wholly defray the expenses of the next year. Other students select a four years' course in any one of the thirteen trades which the school offers, or they may take agriculture or business. This means practical experience in the line chosen; for instance, the carpenter builds or repairs a real house, instead of putting together a few useless blocks of wood which have

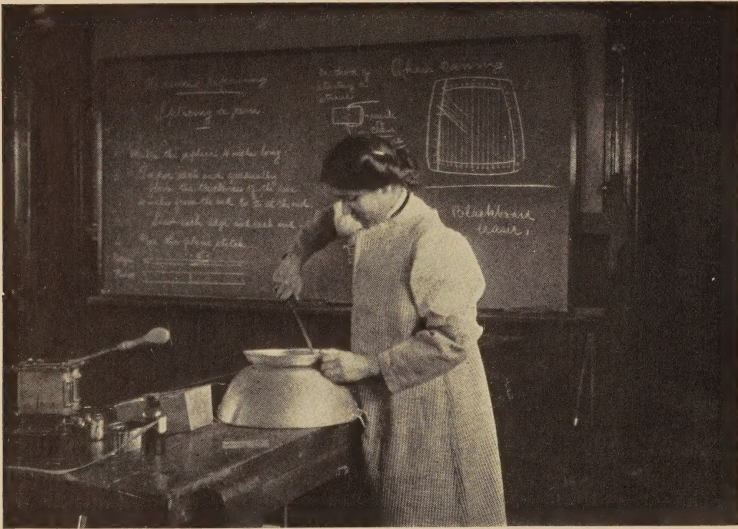


A TRADE-SCHOOL GRADUATE
A Pueblo engineer in a Government school

little connection with any work he will be called upon to do in after life. The students who enter the day school are usually those who have not advanced far enough in their academic work to be able to enter trade or agriculture classes, or those who plan to take the normal course and fit themselves for teachers. Every girl has sewing and cooking, enough of agriculture to give her a working knowledge of gardening, of raising poultry, and of making butter, and, in addition, practical experience in all the duties connected with the management of a well-ordered home. To give a knowledge of elementary business methods, each student receives a monthly account from the school office, and this must balance with the personal accounts which all are required to keep. Practical experience in the matters of vital importance in after life is the thought in all courses, but whether the work lies in the shop, the laundry, or the classroom the idea of service is paramount, and the thought that what they are receiving is not theirs for their own benefit, but that they may help their less fortunate fellow-men.

With such training, what has been accomplished by Hampton

for the Indians in thirty-six years? There are now nearly nine hundred graduates and ex-students, scattered from Nova Scotia to the Pacific, from Manitoba to Texas. By far the largest number of the women students marry and are doing what lies in their power to advance their race. As General Armstrong said, no race can progress beyond its women. Scattered over the reservations are many neatly kept, comfortable, Christian homes, where children are reaping the benefit of Hampton's teachings and getting a better start than their parents had. Others of the women students are in the Government school service, as matrons or teachers, or in industrial positions, while a few in the outside world are earning their living as trained nurses or stenographers,



HAMPTON TEACHES INDIAN GIRLS TO REPAIR HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS

or by following the varied occupations of their Anglo-Saxon sisters.

Among the men, there is an even greater range of occupations. Farming and stockraising claim the largest number, many are following the trades learned at Hampton, some are in the Government service, and some are working independently, while still others are in the professions. Careful records, verified by frequent trips among former students, show that eighty-seven per cent have, all things considered, made satisfactory records.

The conditions to which most Indian students return are hard, far harder than the average Easterner can realize. Many of the reservations are long distances from the railroads, so that supplies are hard to get as well as expensive, while in places water is a real luxury. The standards of the community must



THE HOME OF AN INDIAN GRADUATE IN SOUTH DAKOTA
Built by himself from plans drawn while at Hampton

also be taken into consideration, and in all too many localities the white people living near are not of a type to prove either helpful or elevating. With all these difficulties, and many, many more, we expect far more of the Indian than we would of a white student who had enjoyed equal advantages. A white boy who has been in school until he is perhaps twenty, and in that time has had to master, in addition to the usual studies, a new language, and accept an entirely strange system of living, is not expected to raise the standards of his home community to any



INTERIOR OF AN OMAHA GRADUATE'S HOME

very great extent. The Indian is. He must not only have acquired a trade and be able to do skillful work, but he must speak English well enough to act as interpreter, understand the Bible, and teach in Sunday school, as well as be prepared to advise in the councils of his people regarding various phases of their legal standing and land questions. And when he is unable to fulfill all these requirements we hear that Indian education is a failure!

That the men, as a whole, keep up to the standards of the school better than the women is undoubtedly true. It is the natural and inevitable result of a life that brings the man into competition with many men, and keeps the woman in the home, where she is very probably entirely under the dominion of an autocratic person of the old type, who not only does not wish but will not allow any changes in the household régime. There are some who, with exceptional ability, have made remarkably fine records, who stand out in their communities as leaders and have their part in every good work. But, as is bound to be the case, the great majority lead average lives, and in the end, perhaps, they are the ones who count for most. The influence is far-reaching of a woman who can write: "I look back and think what a thoughtless, careless girl I was. I never could settle myself down to be sober. I only thought of fun all the time, and now I am a grandmother. I have nine living children and I have certainly had some rough places to travel over, but I have tried to stick to my principles. When those that I knew failed to do right, and fell, I never went back on them, but gave them my right hand and helped them to right their wrongs, doing it sometimes at my own cost. If there is any evil plot going on that I know about I generally put a stop to it. Of course I have never distinguished myself, but in my own quiet, unknown way I have tried to lead those that I have had anything to do with to the right. It isn't much. I wish I could have done great things, when I remember my teachers that tried so hard to educate me, but I have never had time."

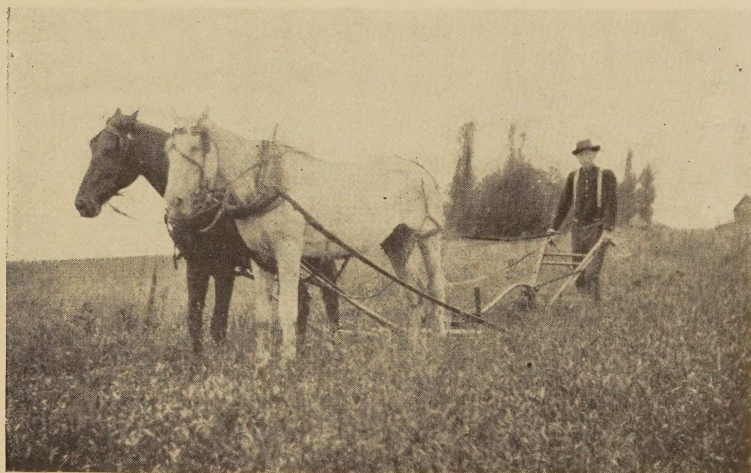
Since Hampton's first Indian students returned to their homes, conditions have changed in a vast number of ways. There are now many schools. English is becoming an inter-tribal language, reservations are being broken up, and the sales of land bring white neighbors into every community. In spite of all that has been done, however, by the Government and by missionaries, there was never a time when the need was greater, or when Indian men and women of broad sympathy and Christian training could help their people more. Hampton's part in this work is necessarily small, but the forty-six girls and boys representing seventeen tribes who are now in school, the largest

number at any time since the loss of the Government appropriation, are preparing themselves to go back to their people, to do what they can in the work of uplift for the race that so greatly needs their help.

Many people have the idea that because Hampton Institute no longer has a Government appropriation for Indian students it is closed to them. Such is not the case, for the school feels that it can do more for them in some ways than ever before.

Hampton Institute does not wish to compete in any way with other schools ; it merely aims to supplement their work. It desires only boys and girls who feel the need of further training in trades or agriculture, in domestic science, domestic arts, or normal work, and wish to be fitted to teach and lead their own people.

The work which the returned students from Hampton have done, and are doing, has proved the value of this training. The *Quarterly Journal*, published by the Society of American Indians, contains this statement: "Hampton Institute has produced some of the ablest leaders of the Indian of this day and generation. The spirit of helpfulness to brother man is the keynote of all instruction and training. Hampton's devotion to duty brings its reward in the character and achievements of her graduates."



AN ONEIDA FARMER

